



WILTON ECO-DEV

Re-imagining the future of a rural NH community

Sept 2016



Wilton Economic Development Leadership Team Charter

Our responsibilities are to set priorities, make recommendations, and guide the execution of programs and projects that help achieve the vision of Wilton residents to remain a vibrant and thriving small town. Our goals are to protect its rural environment, historic charm, and natural resources while promoting opportunities for residential and business growth that are compatible, responsive and supportive to the needs of the community and local economy.

Leadership Team

Creating the long view for a sustainable, thoughtful balance between economic development and conservation

- Jennifer Beck, Chair jenniferscottbeck@gmail.com - Overall/Milestones
- Dan Donovan, Wilton Select Board Rep dan@maynarddonovan.com – Business Resources
- Jackie Kahle, VP, Marketing, CA Technologies jrtkahle@comcast.net - Marketing
- Christine Devine, CEO Devine Flooring chris@devineflooring.com – Business surveying
- Tina Smith, AVP, Financial Services, People's United Bank tina.smith@peoples.com – Business surveying
- Harry Dailey, Wilton School Board and Budget Committee harry-dailey@comcast.net - Milestones

UNH Business Retention and Expansion Task Force – additional members

- Mike McGonegal, Scouts and WMUR mike@mikemcgonagal.com -
- Dick Putnam, Putnam's Clothing ptmclothes@aol.com
- Nancy Clark, Heritage Commission and Historical Society

Board of Advisors (still recruiting)

The sounding board for *early stage* ideas and concepts

- Rev. Robin Lunn lunazoon@gmail.com
- Dick Putnam ptmclothes@aol.com
- Steve McDonough, entrepreneur
- Dennis Markaverich – Proprietor, Wilton Town Theatre
- Steve Blanchard of Maple Street
- Steve Collins, of Collins Road
- Chuck Crawford, CEO, Kimball Physics
- Nathan Curtis, Sales Manager, Monadnock Water monandnock9@tds.net
- Gregory Pearsall, Eagle Scout Master and Geek Squad the_pearsalls@outlook.com
- Mary E. McDonough, BS,PT,MGA, School Administrator, Pine Hill Waldorf School
<mailto:mmcdonough@pinehill.org>
- Geraldine Kline, Head of School, High Mowing gkline@highmowing.org
- Gary and Melissa Crooker, Crook's Books, American Legion crooks@tellink.net

Master Plan Vision

- ☐ To be a Town that supports a climate in which the downtown is thriving, to be a place where visitors seek as a destination, and to enhance the Town as a Gateway to the Monadnock Region, while preserving the character that is strictly unique to Wilton.
- ☐ To be a vibrant and collaborative community that provides support and opportunities for its young, old, and ages in between to affordably live, work, visit, play, and stay for a lifetime.
- ☐ To be a Town that is a gold standard for the region by celebrating its image as a creative community where residents enjoy art, culture, and high quality education.
- ☐ To be a Town that is environmentally progressive with its policies involving energy, natural resources, building standards, and land use patterns that are critical to Wilton's long term sustainability.
- ☐ To be a Town that benefits from safe and adequate public services and facilities, and ensures that the Town's growth will occur at a rate not to out-pace the ability to provide these services and facilities at reasonable costs.
- ☐ To be a Town that has a transportation system that provides a variety of transportation options to allow all people to get to where they need, without impacting the Town's scenic and rural character and natural resources.

What issues have others raised or are thinking about?

- No good answers to the NextGen economic driver question. But this isn't a Wilton only issue. We're part of a regional network of towns.
- Can we be an entrepreneurial seed bed? Many successful companies start as home-based businesses.
- But digital age businesses don't care about real estate, they care about connectivity.
- Light manufacturing, small tech, even professional services firms say their challenge is attracting qualified younger employees.
- Target visitors in the young married sector. Many who visit, eventually move here seeking an urban culture, village lifestyle.
- How do we help people get the most they can from their networks and fight for regulations and funding to expand them?
- Are colleges willing to open regional campuses that would attract students, teachers and their families?
- What about more efforts like The Sanctuary @47 Maple that provide a collaborative work environment for home office workers?

Focus Areas: A Diverse Tax Base

- ☐ *Completed*: Form a town economic development advisory committee to make recommendations relating to economic development to the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen
- ☐ *Completed*: Initiate work with UNH to bring the Business Expansion and Retention Program to Wilton
- ☐ Diversify Wilton's tax base to reduce burdens on residential property owners. Review cost-savings opportunities related to existing town government and school district practices.
- ☐ Consult with surrounding communities to consider feasibility of a regional start-up business incubator or 'makers space' to promote local collaboration and innovation.
- ☐ Continue to address the lengthy development review phase with a streamlined process, improved marketing, and a Guide to Opening a Business in the community.
- ☐ Promote more home-based businesses by creating and marketing a brochure outlining the steps necessary to do so in Wilton.
- ☐ Invest in new businesses in emerging and trending sectors
- ☐ Retain current businesses and anchor attractions
- ☐ Assist Town Administrator with proposals to create economic zones

Focus Areas: A Vibrant Downtown Center

- ☐ Partner with the Wilton Main Street Association to better market downtown and Wilton as a destination creating a digital footprint and brand image.
- ☐ Explore possible new ordinances which would restrict ground-floor use of Main Street properties to commercial (non-residential) use only, while enabling residential use on upper floors.
- ☐ Consider adoption of provisions of NH RSA 79-E relating to property tax relief incentives to encourage redevelopment of underutilized downtown buildings.
- ☐ Promote the existing Façade Improvements Program.
- ☐ Pursue grant funding to bring back the tourist trains, build a handicap accessible river walk and concert gazebo

Focus Areas: A Destination

Market Wilton's existing destinations, promote tourism-based cross partnerships, and review existing regulations, to ensure they support Wilton's rural and agricultural character as well as town goals related to economic development and livability.

- ☐ Consider feasibility of adopting an agri-tourism ordinance to promote rural character and increased economic use of Wilton's farms.
- ☐ Determine which town department or organization could take the lead on updating the new website to prominently advertise local destinations, events, artists, and businesses.
- ☐ Collaborate with the Wilton Main Street Association to improve tourism.
- ☐ Continue to promote and market Wilton's access to high speed internet.